

SHORTER THINGS — SEASON III —

An Anthology of
Two-Sentence
Ghost Stories

Sponsored by

Hofstra University Honors College

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In Memory of

2018

Contest Winners

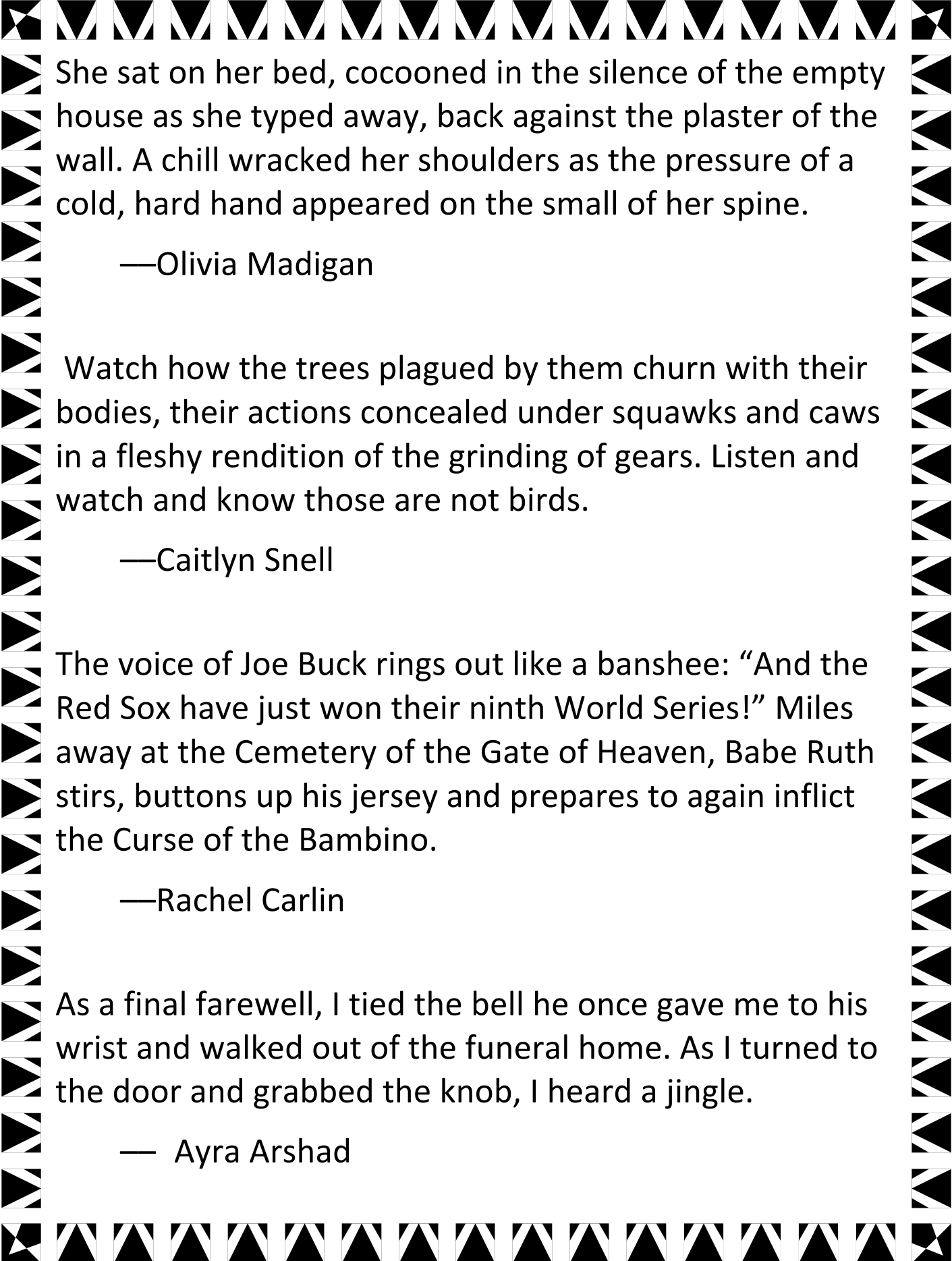


Caitlin Snell

Ayra Arshad

Rachel Carlin

Olivia Madigan



She sat on her bed, cocooned in the silence of the empty house as she typed away, back against the plaster of the wall. A chill wracked her shoulders as the pressure of a cold, hard hand appeared on the small of her spine.

—Olivia Madigan

Watch how the trees plagued by them churn with their bodies, their actions concealed under squawks and caws in a fleshy rendition of the grinding of gears. Listen and watch and know those are not birds.

—Caitlyn Snell

The voice of Joe Buck rings out like a banshee: “And the Red Sox have just won their ninth World Series!” Miles away at the Cemetery of the Gate of Heaven, Babe Ruth stirs, buttons up his jersey and prepares to again inflict the Curse of the Bambino.

—Rachel Carlin

As a final farewell, I tied the bell he once gave me to his wrist and walked out of the funeral home. As I turned to the door and grabbed the knob, I heard a jingle.

— Ayra Arshad



The corner held the bloodied survivor, movement no longer possible. The last noise was hushed from his lips, The Silence left to its preferred solitude.

—Ryan Fallert



I was falling down my usual Youtube hole, watching a video about cooking chicken breasts thirty-two different ways, when the video cuts out to reveal “Server Error 502”. In a panic, I scour the internet to find an answer, any answer, as to why I can no longer watch various chicken torture methods when I realize; they did it, they actually broke the internet.

— Sophia Sola



"There are four things in life you cannot buy: silence, solidarity, sympathy, and solace" she said. "Yes, but you can buy a gun" answered her husband slowly.

— Sasha Pezenik



Once there was an ugly barnacle. He was so ugly that everyone died — The End.*

—~~David Lazar~~ Patrick Star



I never leave a witness and clean up after I'm done; breaking this rule is not permitted. As I finished cleaning the blood, I heard a faint voice behind me, "Daddy?"

— Ayra Arshad



My family ate out for dinner on a chilly Friday night and when we returned home I jokingly rang the door bell a few times, while I waited for my mom get the keys out of her bag. Suddenly, I noticed a yellow eye staring through the glass in my door.

—Tristan Meikle



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Thick globs of red gelatinous substance drip-dropped off the leaves at a standard rate, forming gorgeously dark puddles on the sidewalk. Looking up at the tree, someone was smiling.

One second the girl stood, smiling and insane, and the next she sank into a temporary abyss in the earth. Perhaps the scream was lost in the vastness of the meadow, or maybe it never existed at all.

The steps were spotless except for the remaining pieces of a once-perfect manicure, silver flowers carved thinly into existence on backgrounds of pink, purple, green, and blue, with the last color in the sequence lost forever. Along with the thumb.

—Emily Ewing





As my wife enjoyed a weekend in Florida, I was shaken from sleep by my daughter's piercing cry, but as I walked down the dark hallway toward her nursery, the crying stopped. The glass doorknob was like an icicle as I entered the room to see a woman glowing red sink through the floor holding my baby.

— Peter Soucy



I finally uploaded my perfect twelve-page term paper after spending countless hours researching, creating, organizing and writing it for my most difficult class of the semester without forgetting my header, title and work cited. Yet, I forgot to click submit.

— Kaila Cerbone



A wisp of air, warm as a lover's breath; a static heart, chill as a morning fog; a withered bone, hard as its earthen bed. Bound together, crude seams fall to tatters, a hopeless, empty husk left to wander.

—Justin Graver





And so it came to be, on the 31st of October, Thaddeus King lay in his grave and wept, not for the life he had lost, but for the life he still thought he had, for though his heart had ceased pumping its crimson payload and his lungs had shriveled up like a rotten fruit, Thad was convinced that the pale, rotten thing his spirit was inhabiting was, in fact, just a temporary problem and not the uncomfortable eternity he was damned to. It would be several decades, when the maggots had eaten away what had once been his face, until he realized the truth: Hell is not the fiery pit, nor Dante's frozen wastes, but denial and stagnation, with repentance arriving only when it's much too late.

—Darin Thee



I bit into a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
It crunched.

—Shelby Sandstrom





You have to listen to music for class. It's sung by the Troubadours.

—Joseph Ronzetti



A touch on my back as I journeyed home. A laugh; a spear; Polyphemus?

—David Chacko



All was well. Then the Tree started talking.

—Alicia Renda



Footsteps are creaking along the staircase, whispers in my ear. The wind is calling.

—Edy-Marin Bernardy





From within the shadows they crept and within the air
you went. Blood spewed and then you died and no one
would let you forget, even in death.

Let's be friends, you seem real cool. But little do you
know you can NEVER leave my side.

You, man's best friend, I fed you ever since you bred. For
why would you want to eat me instead?

—Makeyla Daniels



Dr. Limnatis walks on stage and utters 3 simple words.
“Nothing is real”

—Cameron Boyce



There once was an Open-Mic Night. Max was the only
one to show up and the mic was closed.

—Maxwell Underhill





The stormy waters rushed up on to both sides of my boat as my crew and I struggled to keep it afloat. Suddenly, Poseidon, the seeker of my doom, emerged from the ocean, casting darkness on my boat as I stared up at my impending death.

—Emily Hughes



Once upon a time there was a big strong tree, the best of all the wood. At once he was hewn down by our savior's enemies.

—Matthew LeBlanc



Nearing 2AM on Monday night, a Hofstra honors student checks Blackboard. "50 pages of Old English text due tomorrow and a 3 page reaction paper or else!"

—Nicolette Filos





Death came knocking on my door today. And the one next to mine, and the one next to that.

—George Allen



Blood dripped on the floor in a constellation of horror. By the time anyone noticed, I was already gone.

The reflection in the mirror shows a pallid visage staring back at me. I wish it was mine.

—Jordan Osborne



You walk into the C&E lecture. Turns out you haven't walked into the C&E lecture; as Professor Karofsky explained, you can never move that far.

You wake up Tuesday and now must attend C&E! Boo!

—Becca Weeden





I stay up all night studying for a math test. The numbers begin to disappear, they are gone, they never existed.

I walk to the fridge to get my leftovers. Alas, my roommate ate them.

—Leilah Abelman



As the shrieking mob of students surrounded the professor, thrusting homework submissions at her, she tried desperately to make out their words. Their pages of homework problems sliced her hands open, and she screamed as she finally understood: "Staplers! Staplers! Do you have a stapler?"

—Johanna Franklin, Associate Professor of Mathematics





The semester is more than half over. We still have to read the *Alexiad*.

—Steven D. Smith Associate Professor of Classics



Hearing the bed creak, she turned, surprised that she was there. Taking her hand, she caressed it, only to feel it disintegrate in her hand.

—Jennifer Rich, Associate Professor of Writing Studies and Rhetoric



Listening to the chant of his people, the King of the Cavity Creeps hummed quietly to himself, “We make holes in teeth!” Halloween was coming, he knew, and soon, Toothopolis would feel the power of his mighty hammer.

—Lisa DeTora, Associate Professor, Department of Writing and Rhetoric





No manner of insult could have matched my lawyer's insistence that I plead *non compos mentis* to account for the slaughter that lay before me, a lesson the unappreciative fool learned soon enough as I cut his throat and thoughtfully watched him fall lifeless among the corpses. What art worth the name is not, after all, the devoted work of a soul possessed by the demands of love that recognizes no measure of self-sacrifice or excess as it offers itself, and whatever others it may require, even unto annihilation in its demoniac pursuit of form?

The curious thing that happens when you tidy up your arrangement with the minister of hell and are able, without remorse or fear of indictment, to follow your real desires to debauchery and dissolution is that you quickly realize how late you are to the party, how the vast majority of people have already committed their souls to eternal damnation. As you readjust your vision both to the reality of things and to what is now possible, you come to accept, almost too naturally, that power and fortune and glory at whatever expense really are more valuable than fairness and beauty and love and other such aesthetically quaint ideals, and the only real torment you suffer is the recognition that you wasted so much time before you figured it out and finally called the devil to your side.

—John Krapp, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature





HAPPY
HALLOWEEN